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A1059

INCOMING
TELEGRAM

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ACTION HA-05

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PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
NSCE-00 SSO-00 ICAC-00 INRE-00 AID-07 OCT-02 MC-02
TRSE-00 EB-05 OMB-01 /100 W

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O R 221940Z FEB 80
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4366
INFO AMEMBASSY AMUNICION
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO
USUN NEW YORK 1034
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
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SECTION 1 OF 2 BUENOS AIRES 1559

USEEC

ROME FOR VATICAN OFFICE

E.O. 12065: AM

TAGS: SHUM, AR

SUBJECT: (U) HUMAN RIGHTS SUMMARY - FEBRUARY 16-22, 1980

REF: BUENOS AIRES 1389

(U) SUMMARY: PREPARATION OF THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT'S
REPLY TO THE INTER-AMERICAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
REPORT DOMINATED HEADLINES RELATING TO THE HUMAN
RIGHTS FRONT. A NEW JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES CASE--THIS
ONE INVOLVING A WITNESS MOTHER WHO LOST CUSTODY OF HER
CHILDREN--APPEARS A NEW SETBACK IN ARGENTINE COURTS.
END SUMMARY.

1. (U) IACHR REPORT---
ACCORDING TO RAUL QUIJANO, ARGENTINA'S AMBASSADOR
TO THE OAS, THE GOA'S REPLY TO THE IACHR REPORT IS IN
ITS FINAL STAGES. QUIJANO ALSO STATED THAT HE
EXPECTED THE REPORT TO BE RELEASED AROUND APRIL 20.
RIGHT-WING HARDLINERS HAVE ALREADY BEGUN RATTLING
THEIR SABERS OVER THE OAS REPORT--AGAINST VIDELA.
"LA NUEVA PROVINCIA," WHICH OFTEN SPEAKS FOR THIS
PARTICULAR LINE OF THOUGHT, CARRIED AN EDITORIAL ON
HOW THE GOA SHOULD NOT HAVE INVITED THE IACHR. THE
EDITORIAL THAT THE GOA SHOULD NOT HAVE RUSHED
INTO INVITING THE COMMISSION WITHOUT DELIBERATING AND
HEEDING "WISE COUNSEL" AND THAT SOON THE REGIME WILL
BE FACED WITH THE RESULTS OF ITS "RECKLESSNESS."
ACCORDING TO THE EDITORIAL THE GOA'S HASTY DECISION
TO INVITE THE IACHR WAS ANOTHER IN A GROWING LIST OF
MISTAKES IN WHICH THE GOA FORGED AHEAD OBLIVIOUS TO
REASON--AS IN THE CASE OF "... THE BEAGLE--AND WE LOST
THE ISLANDS"; "ON CORPUS--AND FINALLY WE ACCEPTED
THE BRAZILIAN THESIS"; "AND FINALLY IN THE EPISODE
WITH THE IACHR WE SHALL NOW HAVE TO BEAR THE CON-
SEQUENCES OF MEDIOCRITY AND FRIVOLOUSNESS." MEANWHILE
MEETINGS AT JUNTA LEVEL AND BY PRESIDENT VIDELA WITH
FOREIGN MINISTER PASTOR AND OTHER RANKING ARGENTINE
DIPLOMATS TO CONSIDER GOA'S REPLY TO THE REPORT
CONTINUE.

2. (U) JEHOVAH'S WITNESS LOSES CUSTODY OF CHILDREN---

A WOMAN (UNNAMED) WHO IS A MEMBER OF THE JEHOVAH'S
WITNESSES LOST CUSTODY OF HER TWO CHILDREN IN A DECISION
HANDLED DOWN SEVERAL DAYS AGO BY A CIVIL COURT OF APPEALS.
THE FATHER OF THE CHILDREN HAD INTENSIFIED THE COURT
PRECEDINGS BY APPEALING A DIVORCE COURT RULING WHICH
HAD GRANTED CUSTODY TO THE MOTHER. THE FATHER APPEALED
THE PREVIOUS RULING ON GROUNDS THAT HIS EX-WIFE WAS
A JEHOVAH'S WITNESS. ACCORDING TO THE "BUENOS AIRES
HERALD", THE COURT AWARDED CUSTODY TO THE FATHER
BECAUSE THE "PROBLEMS (OF BEING A JEHOVAH'S WITNESS)
ARE SUFFICIENTLY SERIOUS" TO WARRANT SUCH AN ACTION.
THE COURT WENT ON TO SAY IN ITS DECISION THAT "...
NATIONALITY AND ITS VALUES ARE UNKNOWN TO THOSE WHOSE
PROFESS THIS PSEUDO RELIGION".... THAT "PHYSICAL DANGERS
ARISE FROM REFUSAL TO SUBMIT TO DIVERSE TYPES OF
SURGERY THROUGH (THE WITNESSES') PECULIAR INTERPRETATIONS
OF BIBLICAL TEXTS"... AND THAT "THESE ARE NOT
CIRCUMSTANTIAL PROBLEMS, BUT RATHER ARE OF SUFFICIENT
SERIOUSNESS AS TO JUSTIFY THE REACTION OF THE FATHER."
(U) COMMENT: WE DISCUSSED THE CASE WITH CHARLES
EISENHOWER, US CITIZEN MEMBER OF THE WITNESS COMMUNITY,
WHO TOLD US THAT THE CASE HAD TAKEN HIS BUENOS AIRES
CONGREGATION BY SURPRISE--THAT THE FIRST THAT GROUP

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

(X) Release () Excise () Deny

Exemption(s):

Declassify: () In Part (X) In Full DECONTROL

() Classify as () Extend as () Downgrade to

Date Declassify on Reason

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HAD HEARD OF IT WAS THROUGH THE HERALD ARTICLE.
 EISENHOWER SAID THE WITNESSES' LAWYERS WERE LOOKING
 INTO THE MATTER BUT THAT THEY STILL DID NOT KNOW
 WHO THE WOMAN IS. HE ADDED THAT THROUGH RADIO
 BROADCASTS FROM COLONIA (IN URUGUAY) HIS GROUP HAD
 GAINED THE IMPRESSION THAT THE RULING HAD SOMETHING
 TO DO WITH THE QUESTION OF BLOOD TRANSFUSIONS. HE
 PROMISED TO NOTIFY US WHEN HE HAD ANY ADDITIONAL
 INFORMATION.

(U) IN AN UNRELATED INCIDENT, WITNESSES IN CORDOBA
 ISSUED A STATEMENT FEBRUARY 21 ON GOA RESTRICTIONS
 ON WITNESSES SCHOOL ATTENDANCE. THEY SAID THE
 WITNESSES "CONTINUED TO BE THE INNOCENT VICTIMS OF
 RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION IN CORDOBA CLASSROOM DURING
 1979."

3. (U) PASTOR'S NON-STATEMENT---

THE WEEKEND PRESS REPORTED COMMENTS ALLEGEDLY
 MADE FEBRUARY 17 BY FOREIGN MINISTER PASTOR DURING A
 VACATION VISIT TO PUNTA DEL ESTE ON THE STATE
 DEPARTMENT'S HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT ON ARGENTINA. ACCORDING
 TO PRESS ACCOUNTS PASTOR CLAIMED THAT THE REPORT
 WAS ABSURD AND ERRONEOUS. HE WAS QUOTED AS SAYING
 "... IT IS RIDICULOUS TO CLAIM 15,000 PEOPLE HAD DIS-
 APPEARED FOR POLITICAL REASONS" AND THAT THE REASON
 THE GOA PUBLISHED THE REPORT WAS TO "DEMONSTRATE ITS
 (THE REPORT'S) INCONSISTENCIES, BECAUSE REALITY
 DISPROVES ALL THE ACCUSATIONS".

ON FEBRUARY 19, A FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESMAN
 DENIED THAT PASTOR HAD MADE ANY PRESS STATEMENTS.
 ACCORDING TO THE FOREIGN MINISTRY DISCLAIMER, PASTOR
 HAD BEEN SPEAKING OFF THE RECORD IN AN INFORMAL
 GATHERING WHERE A REPORT JUST HAPPENED TO BE
 PRESENT, BUT THERE WAS NO SPECIFIC DENIAL THAT PASTOR
 HAD SAID THE COMMENTS ATTRIBUTED TO HIM.

BEFORE THE FOREIGN MINISTRY ISSUED THE DENIAL
 THE BUENOS AIRES HERALD IN ITS FEBRUARY 13 EDITORIAL
 TOOK PASTOR TO TASK FOR HIS COMMENTS ON THE REPORT.
 THE HERALD CALLED PASTOR'S STATEMENTS "A SWEEPING
 CONDEMNATION" AND BERATED HIM FOR SINGLING OUT "15,000"
 WHEN THE REPORT HAD GIVEN SEVERAL FIGURES ON THE
 POSSIBLE NUMBER OF DISAPPEARED. THE MAJOR THRUST

OF THE EDITORIAL WAS THAT THE GOA WOULD HAVE TO
 PROVE THAT THE REPORT WAS ERRONEOUS BEFORE IT COULD
 DISMISS IT COMPLETELY.

4. (U) MENDOZA LIGA MEMBER TO FACE TRIAL---
 THE MENDOZA OFFICE OF THE LEAGUE FOR THE RIGHTS
 OF MAN ANNOUNCED THAT ALBINO PEREZ AND MARTHA ROSA
 AGUERO, WHO HAVE BEEN HELD SINCE THE RECENT RAID
 ON THE MENDOZA LIGA OFFICE, HAVE BEEN ACCUSED OF
 VIOLATING NATIONAL SECURITY LAW NO. 20,840 AND
 ARE NOW AT THE DISPOSAL OF THE MENDOZA FEDERAL
 COURT. NATIONAL SECURITY LAW 20,840 APPLIES TO
 CASES OF PEOPLE WHO USE MEANS NOT ESTABLISHED BY
 THE NATIONAL CONSTITUTION TO ACHIEVE THEIR GOALS,
 THEREBY ATTEMPTING TO ALTER THE INSTITUTIONAL ORDER.

5. (U) MOTHERS HOLD SILENT VIGIL---
 ABOUT 300 "MOTHERS" HELD A SILENT VIGIL FEBRUARY 21
 AT 5:00 PM IN FRONT OF THE CASA ROSADA--FOR THE
 FIRST TIME IN MONTHS. FOUR DELEGATES FROM THE GROUP PRE-
 SENTED A PETITION AND INFORMATION OF SOME OF THE
 DISAPPEARED TO A SECRETARY AT THE CASA ROSADA. THE
 VIGIL TOOK PLACE WITHOUT INCIDENT AND LASTED ALMOST
 AN HOUR.

6. (U) BUSH "WINS" IN ARGENTINE POLLS---
 THE ARGENTINE PRESS QUICKLY PICKED ON GEORGE BUSH'S
 CRITICISM OF THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION'S HUMAN RIGHTS
 POLICY TOWARDS ARGENTINA AND BRAZIL. BUSH WAS QUOTED
 BY SEVERAL NEWSPAPERS AS CALLING THE US HUMAN RIGHTS
 POLICY "HYPOCRITICALLY SELECTIVE." THE PAPERS ALSO
 MENTIONED BUSH'S COMMENTS ON MRS. CARTER'S VISIT TO BRAZIL
 DURING WHICH, BUSH IS REPORTED HERE TO HAVE CLAIMED,
 SHE "MET WITH BRAZILIAN DISSIDENTS."
 CASTRO

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